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Donald R. Pittman
Chief Officer

MEMORANDUM

Dr. Edward Klunk
Deputy Chief Officer

Dr. Yolanda Wallace
Deputy Chief Officer

To: High School Principals
cc: Service Learning Coaches
From: Donald R. Pittman
Subject: Service Learning Guidelines
Date: November 18, 2003

Two new policies have been approved regarding Service Learning for Chicago Public Schools:

Required Hours

The Chicago Board of Education has approved a new policy mandating that all students earn 20 service hours by the end of the sophomore year. This policy has been adopted as a response to frequent complaints from school administrators and community organizations that students wait until very late in their senior year to begin earning service hours. By waiting so long, students place an extra burden on community organizations that are not equipped to handle a flood of requests each spring from seniors trying to complete their hours at the last minute. We are encouraging schools to work with classroom teachers and students to create structured service opportunities during freshman and sophomore years, so they can earn quality hours and get off a positive start toward earning their first 20 hours. **This new policy will go into effect for next year’s sophomore class.**

In-School Hours

I have enclosed a document that details new guidelines on students earning service hours within the school. Over the past years it has been a common practice for students to earn service hours by assisting teachers and administrators in the school with various tasks. The enclosed document details that students are now limited to earning no more than 20 hours on in-school projects that provide no measurable benefit outside of the school. Furthermore, we are asking that in-school work be tied to classroom curriculum and have a project orientation. Examples are provided in the enclosed document. Students should not be earning hours for grading papers or cleaning classrooms. One of the most important components of Service Learning is that students are engaged in projects outside of the school building so they can become familiar with community issues, explore potential careers, and develop important civic skills that are the backbone of public education and a strong democracy.

Thank you for your work on behalf of and support of the Service Learning Initiative. We continue to see important gains in how the initiative is implemented at schools across the city. Please call me at 3-3425 or e-mail me at jjschmidt@cps.k12.il.us, if you have any questions about these new policies.

Enclosures: 1

Approved:

Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins

Domingo Trujillo, Chief Instruction Officer
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